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NEWS RELEASE

Feb. 23, 2001

Contact: Jamie Ogden, Building Skills for Adulthood, (406) 243-6754 or (800) 556-6803.

MENTORS NEEDED FOR HELENA-AREA YOUTH

MISSOULA —

Building Skills for Adulthood, an organization that works to match foster youth with mentors in communities throughout Montana, will host mentor training in **Helena** Saturday, March 3.

New volunteers will meet from 8 a.m. to noon on the second floor of the Red Cross Office, 805 N. Main, located across from the Green Thumb. The training is free and open to the public, and volunteers should call Jamie Ogden at (800) 556-6803 for more information.

Building Skills serves youth ages 16 to 21 by helping them move from foster care to independent living by building self-esteem and life skills. The organization is a collaborative program between The University of Montana and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The training will provide instruction for new volunteers in areas such as adolescent development, building the mentoring relationship and fostering life skills. Volunteers donate two to three hours a week to help young people develop such life skills as money management, job seeking, apartment hunting and more. Without these skills, moving out of foster care can be difficult.

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Research has shown that young adults who have left the foster-care system are over represented in homeless, public assistance and prison populations. Youth with mentors demonstrate better attendance, grades and attitudes in school, along with improved self confidence and family relationships.

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